

Role Stress and its Impact on Public and Private Sector Managers in Chennai: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The study attempts to identify the differences in job-related stress pertaining to employees in the managerial cadre in both public and private sector, based on significant role stressors. Attempts are also made to find out whether there exists any significant relationship between role stress and demographic variables like age, educational qualification, marital status, work experience on the stress levels of both public and private sector managers. Survey method is adopted in this study and data are collected from 182 private sector managerial employees and 120 managerial employees in the public sector organizations of Chennai. The responses are measured according to an occupational role stress scale. Sampling method adopted in this study is convenient sampling which is a non-probability sampling method. It is quite evident from the study that though there is no significant difference in the stress experienced by both the public and private sector managers certain individual stressors such as work experience and educational qualifications yield differences.

Keywords

Managers, Role Stress, Public Sector, Private Sector

I. Introduction

Stress in the current scenario is considered to be universal and people in almost all walks of life experience stress to a very great extent. Due to the impact of globalization the influence of Stress in this era of high technology speed, global competition and consumerism is found to be increasing at a faster rate. Taking its toll on the physical and psychological health of the employees especially the managers, it is also found to be affecting the productivity and functioning of an organization. The direct and indirect costs associated with stress is found to be even more greater. Due to its cost, the critical importance of a stress-free work life has been recognized. Work stress is thought to affect individuals' psychological and physical health, as well as organizations' effectiveness, in an adverse manner. Workers who are stressed are also more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. The impact of stress free work atmosphere on the competitive advantage of the organisation cannot be under estimated. Researches carried out in the Indian perspective support the fact that work related stress and mental fatigue is found to affect the Indian employees at the managerial cadre to a very great extent. In such an environment, it becomes the responsibility of the employing organizations and the individual to identify the causes of stress at the workplace and make efforts to reduce them for the effectiveness and efficiency of both individuals as well as the organization.

At workplace, stress related to the role performed by the employee in the organization is one of the important determinants of successful adjustment and subsequent performance of an employee. Stress induced due to roles performed by individuals as employees has been considered as a potent organizational stressor. Role stress is the stress experienced by the persons because of their roles they play in the organization pertaining to jobs. Considering role stress as a debilitating syndrome, this study has been undertaken with

an aim to systematically investigate the factors causing role stress amongst managers in both public and private sector. The causes of role stress is important not only for its potential implications for stress management at public and private sector organizations among managers but also for enhancing an understanding of strategic human resource management. With this aim, the study makes an effort to identify the sources of role stress experienced by the managerial employees.

Role stress refers to the conflict and tension due to the roles being enacted by a person at any given point of time. (Pareek, 2003). Enacted in the context of organizations, such role stresses are called organizational role stress. Any organization may be perceived as a system of roles. These roles are different from positions or offices in the organization. According to Katz and Kahn (1966), office is a relational or power related concept. Pestonjee and Pareek (1997) explain role as the totality of formal tasks, informal tasks and acts as organized by an individual. Each individual is a member of social systems and the expectation as well as demand of one may put pressure on the other. There are 2 role systems: Role Space and Role Set. Stress results from a mismatch between the demands and pressures on the person, on the one hand, and their knowledge and abilities, on the other. It challenges their ability to cope with work. This includes not only situations where the pressures of work exceed the worker's ability to cope but also where the worker's knowledge and abilities are not sufficiently utilized and when there is a conflict in roles played by them in the organisation.

II. Need and Importance of the Study

In an age of highly dynamic and competitive world, man is exposed to various stressors that is likely to affect his productivity which in turn will affect the organization's productivity. The growing importance of interventional strategies is felt more at organizational level. It is in this scenario the influence of organizational role stress on managers who play a pivotal role in the organization is studied and therefore this study is considered to be of great significance. Organizational role stress is supposed to operate in interaction with the general ill being and well being. As organizations become more complex, the potentiality for stress increases. The toll is found to be even more greater in terms on stress among managers. Stress is a consequence of socio-economic complexity and to some extent is a stimulant as well. The influence of various organizational role stressors on managerial employees belonging to public and private sector organizations draw special attention in this study.

III. Review of Literature

Azizi Yahaya, Noordin Yahaya, et al (2009) attempted to find out the causes of occupational stress within the organization and the implication on job satisfaction and intention to leave and absenteeism. The finding showed that occupational stress does not have direct effect on intention to leave and absenteeism but have direct negative effect on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has negative effect on intention to leave and absenteeism.

Bhattacharya Sunetra and Basu Jayanti (2007) in the article "Distress, Wellness and rganizational Role Stress among IT

Professionals: Role of Life Events and Coping Resources”, attempted to explain the effect of sex and age as well as the predictability of the variables from stressful life events. Results of the study revealed that women experienced greater wellness and older personnel experienced more distress.

Nasurdin, Aizzat Mohd Ramayah, T Kumaresan, S(2005) in their study tried to identify the influence of organizational variables (conflict, blocked career, alienation, work overload, and unfavorable work environment) on job stress among managers and to examine whether this relationship varies according to the individual's level of neuroticism. The results of the study conveyed the fact that neuroticism was found to moderate the effects of the three organizational stressors (alienation, work overload, and unfavorable work environment) on job stress.

A. Khetarpal & G. Kochar(2006) in their study attempted to provide a preventive and positive approach to women experiencing stress at work and at home. to find out the level of role stress and to identify key role stressors, the OSI inventory by A.Krivastava was used. It was found that majority of women were under moderately low level of stress. The key stressors which affect maximum number of women are Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment and Under-participation.

A study conducted by LeRouge, et al (2006) concluded that role stress was positively related to both job satisfaction and organizational commitment and that self-esteem significantly moderated the relationship between role stress fit and job satisfaction.

IV. Objectives

- To find out the difference in stress levels between public and private sector managerial employees.
- To study the impact of demographic factors on managerial employees' stress levels.
- To find out the impact of the various role stressors on the managerial employees.
- To identify whether there is any significant impact of the various role stressors on the overall organizational stress.

V. Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant relationship between the ORS and the different age groups of employees.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between the marital status of employees and ORS
- H03: Different levels of work experience does not have a significant impact on the ORS of managers in the public and private sector
- H04: There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of managerial employees and ORS
- H05: There is no significant difference in ORS between public and private sector employees.

VI. Research Methodology

The type of research used for this study is descriptive in which scientific methodology is used to explore the level and dimensions of occupational role stress in the public and private sector managers. With an aim to assess the impact of role stressors on the organizational role stress, a sample of 331 managerial employees are drawn from both public and private sector organizations—131 from the former and 200 from the later. The anonymous responses of the bank employees were taken through a well structured questionnaire. However, 29 responses did not

fully qualify to be included in the final analysis due to incomplete information provided in the questionnaire. So, the responses of only 302 respondents were found to be suitable for inclusion in the study.

Convenience sampling method is used in this study as the data are collected based on the convenience of the researcher.

The researcher has taken into consideration 10 variables of Organizational Role Stress for analysis. They are

- Inter-role distance (IRD): It is experienced when there is a conflict between organizational and non-organizational goal.
- Role stagnation (RS): It is the feeling of being stuck in the same role. Such a type of stress results in perception that there is no opportunity for the furthering or progress of one's career.
- Role expectation conflicts (REC): This type of stress is generated by different expectations by different significant persons, i.e. superiors, subordinates and peers, about the same roles and the role occupant's ambivalence as to whom to please.
- Role erosion (RE): This type of role stress is the function of the role occupant's feeling that some functions which should properly belong to his/her role are transferred to/or performed by some other role. This can also happen when the functions are performed by the role occupant but the credit for them goes to someone else.
- Role overload (RO): When the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the significant roles in his/her role set, he/she experiences role overload. There are two aspects of this stress: quantitative and qualitative.
- Role isolation (RI): This type of role stress refers to the psychological distance between the occupant's role and other roles in the same role set.
- Personal inadequacy (PI): It arises when the role occupant feels that he/she does not have the necessary skills and training for effectively performing the functions expected from his/her role.
- Self-role distance (SRD): When the role a person occupies goes against his/her self-concept, then he/she feels self-role distance type of stress.
- Role ambiguity (RA): It refers to the lack of clarity about the expectations regarding the role which may arise out of lack of information or understanding.
- Resource inadequacy (RI): This type of stress is evident when the role occupant feels that he/she is not provided with adequate resources for performing the functions expected from his/her

VII. Results and Discussion

A. Reliability of ORS Scale

The reliability of the various stressors pertaining to ORS is measured on a five-point Likert scale with values ranging from 0 to 4. Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's alpha value of the ORS scale is 0.932, indicating that the scale is highly reliable for this particular study. Cronbach's alpha values for the different stressors of ORS indicate the fact that all the stressors, apart from SRD, have a high Cronbach's alpha value. Therefore SRD is eliminated for further study, and the remaining nine stressors of ORS are analysed.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Value of Stressors

| No. | Variable | Coefficient |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Inter-role distance (IRD) | 0.800 |
| 2. | Role stagnation (RS) | 0.717 |
| 3. | Role expectation conflict (REC) | 0.719 |
| 4. | Role erosion (RE) | 0.719 |
| 5. | Role overload (RO) | 0.812 |
| 6. | Role isolation (RI) | 0.617 |
| 7. | Personal inadequacy (PI) | 0.720 |
| 8. | Self-role distance (SRD) | 0.592 |
| 9. | Role ambiguity (RA) | 0.767 |
| 10. | Resource inadequacy (RIn) | 0.760 |
| | ORS | 0.932 |

B. Factor Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test provides a measure of sampling adequacy in which, generally, a value greater than 0.4 is desirable. In this case, the KMO measure is 0.812, implying that the correlation between pairs of variables can be explained to a great degree by other variables. The Bartlett's test value is 0.000, indicating that the value is highly significant.

Table 2: Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

| Test | Test statistic | df | Significance value |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------|--------------------|
| KMO measure of sampling adequacy | 0.812 | - | - |
| Bartlett's test of sphericity | 8.619 | 1225 | 0.000 |
| Source: Primary Data | | | |

Table 3: Eigenvalue of Components

| Components | Initial Eigenvalue |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Inter-role distance (IRD) | 12.909 |
| Role stagnation (RS) | 3.228 |
| Role expectation conflict (REC) | 2.751 |
| Role erosion (RE) | 2.432 |
| Role overload (RO) | 1.910 |
| Role isolation (RI) | 1.758 |
| Self-role distance (SRD) | 1.609 |
| Role ambiguity (RA) | 1.338 |
| Resource inadequacy (RIn) | 1.244 |
| Source: Primary Data | |

Table 3 shows that the value of all components is far higher than 1, implying that they all converge on one overall stressor, i.e., ORS. We can, therefore, conclude that the scale is convergent.

Factor loadings indicate the strength of the relationship between a particular factor and a particular variable. In a simple-component matrix, a particular variable may show higher loadings for many factors, making it difficult to determine the variables under any given factor. We solve this problem by rotating the matrix, making it easier to assign a number of variables with greater loading for a particular factor. The rotated-component matrix shows that most of the items load well (> 0.4) on nine factors of the ORS scale. Since the value greater than 0.4 is considered meaningful, it can therefore be concluded that there is a strong relationship between the factors and variables on this scale.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of Respondents

| Variables | Category | No. of Repondents | Percentage |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| Education Level | Graduates | 70 | 23 |
| | Post Graduates | 232 | 77 |
| Age | < 35 years | 176 | 58 |
| | years | 102 | 34 |
| | >50 years | 24 | 8 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-----|----|
| Work Experience | 1-10years | 164 | 54 |
| | 11-20 years | 84 | 28 |
| | >25 years | 54 | 18 |
| Sector | Private Sector Employees | 182 | 60 |
| | Public Sector Employees | 120 | 40 |
| Marital status | Unmarried | 80 | 26 |
| | Married | 222 | 74 |

Source: Primary Data

From the demographic profile of the respondents it can be implied that majority of the managerial employees (i.e) 77% taken for the study were post graduates. Around 58% of the respondents taken for the study are less than 35 years of age. Of the total sample size of 302 managerial respondents taken for the study 182 employees (i.e) 60% belong to the Private sector and 120 employees (i.e) 40% belong to the Public sector. Majority of the respondents taken for study are married and possess an overall work experience of 1- 10 years.

Table 5 : Status of Various Role Stressors

In order to rank various stressors, the mean values and standard deviations are estimated followed by those of the total ORS scale. The table below shows that all nine individual stressors give rise to moderate levels of stress among the employees sampled. The mean value of total role stress is 1.4913, implying that employees face moderate levels of total ORS. The highest mean value of role erosion is 1.778, implying that employees are subject to this stressor the most. The highest standard deviation value of role overload is 1.009, indicating that some groups experience role overload more than others.

| Role Stressors | Mean | Standard Deviation | Rank | Status |
|----------------|-------|--------------------|------|----------|
| IRD | 1.675 | 0.972 | 2 | Moderate |
| RS | 1.597 | 0.931 | 4 | Moderate |
| REC | 1.358 | 0.820 | 8 | Moderate |
| RE | 1.778 | 0.890 | 1 | Moderate |
| RO | 1.365 | 1.009 | 7 | Moderate |
| RI | 1.562 | 0.820 | 9 | Moderate |
| PI | 1.393 | 0.911 | 6 | Moderate |
| RA | 1.112 | 0.926 | 5 | Moderate |
| RIn | 1.663 | 0.990 | 3 | Moderate |
| ORS | 1.491 | 0.654 | | Moderate |

Note: The mean score is computed on a scale of 0 to 4, and the stress levels are divided into "low" (0-1), "moderate" (1-2), and "high" (more than 2 and up to 4).

Source: Primary Data

Table 7: Comparative Levels of Stress Among Public and Private Sector Employees

| Stressor | | Public sector | Private sector | Significance Value | |
|--------------|------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|---------|
| Sample = 182 | | | Sample = 120 | | |
| IRD | Mean | 1.613 | Mean | 1.770 | 0.029* |
| SD | | 0.911 | SD | | |
| RO | Mean | 1.228 | Mean | 1.573 | 0.843 |
| SD | | 1.008 | SD | | |
| RI | Mean | 1.534 | Mean | 1.606 | 0.000** |
| SD | | 0.882 | SD | | 0.718 |
| RE | Mean | 1.806 | Mean | 1.736 | 0.441 |
| SD | | 0.919 | SD | | 0.846 |
| REC | Mean | 1.312 | Mean | 1.430 | 0.536 |
| SD | | 0.835 | SD | | 0.795 |
| PI | Mean | 1.470 | Mean | 1.276 | 0.000** |
| SD | | 0.990 | SD | | 0.765 |
| RS | Mean | 1.492 | Mean | 1.756 | 0.698 |
| SD | | 0.909 | SD | | 0.944 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| | | | | | |
| SRD | Mean | 1.362 | Mean | 1.420 | 0.788 |
| | SD | 0.788 | SD | 0.759 | |
| RA | Mean | 1.076 | Mean | 1.166 | 0.815 |
| | SD | 0.948 | SD | 0.893 | |
| RIn | Mean | 1.742 | Mean | 1.543 | 0.156 |
| | SD | 1.026 | SD | 0.923 | |
| ORS | Mean | 1.464 | Mean | 1.532 | 0.687 |
| | SD | 0.677 | SD | 0.618 | |

Note: ** significant at 99-percent confidence level, * significant at 95-percent confidence level.

Source: Primary Data

Applying t-test separately to different dimensions of ORS, it is found that three factors reflect a significant difference among public and private sector employees. These factors include role isolation, personal inadequacy, and inter-role distance. Table 7 also shows that employees face a moderate level of total role stress, but that the mean values of most of the stressors—apart from role erosion, personal inadequacy, and resource inadequacy—to which private sector employees are subject, is greater than that of public sector employees.

VIII. Conclusion

Globalization and technological innovations have brought about new challenges to employees in the managerial cadre which in turn has paved way the study of mental health and stress management. History has demonstrated that with each new technological innovation there have been profound changes in the quality of life of human beings, societal changes follow suit the scientific changes. The productivity of the work force is the most decisive factor as far as the success of an organisation is concerned. The productivity in turn is dependent on the psychosocial well being of the employees. This particular research was intended to study the impact of occupational stress on public and private Bank employees. The impact of various socio-demographic factors on stress level of managers in both public and private sector reveals that educational qualifications and work experience have a significant impact on managerial employees' stress levels.

The influence of role stress between the public and private sector is also found to be more or less the same among the managers belonging to both public and private sector as per the study. It is therefore necessary for the managers at the workplaces the sources of role stress first. Moreover, knowing the sources can be helpful in choosing a method to deal with role stress. Although it is not possible to control all of life's events and identification of role stress is a complicated task in the organizational context, through right understanding and good planning, role stress and its causes among managers can be alleviated to a very great extent and productivity can be enhanced. Success always belongs to managers who can manage stress effectively, eliminate emotional problems, sustain mental well-being, and encourage subordinates to work in the midst of stressful environments.

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